AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

The paragraph beginning on page 8, line 30 has been amended as follows:

In a similar manner, the counterclockwise WDM signal propagating over the protection ring 102 during a fault recovery period is supplied to an optical demultiplexer 300' of the ADM processor 210 where the traffic signal is separated into wavelength components [[$_{-1 \text{ and } -2}$]] λ_1 and λ_2 and fed to optical splitters 301' and 302', respectively. Optical path switches 305' and 306' are provided to establish a junction point of an optical path or a source point of an optical path for add-up signals supplied from the network element via protection switches 211, 212. These path switches are controlled from an external source to exclusively an optical multiplexer 307' with signals from splitters [[301, 302]] 301', 302' or signals from protection switches 211 and 212.

The paragraph beginning on page 11, line 28 has been amended as follows:

At the destination node 108, the path switches 305', 306' are turned off to prevent [[no]] signals from being applied from these switches to the multiplexer 307' in preparation for possible reception of the terminating signals from the protection ring 102 via the demultiplexer 300' when the protection switches 213 and 214 are switched to their lower position.

The paragraph beginning on page 12, line 23 has been amended as follows:

When the monitor circuit 215 of source node 106 receives the OAM frame 134 (step 356), it recognizes that the frame is destined for its own node and a link fault has occurred and provides switching to a protection path by operating its protection switches 211, 212 (step

357). As a result the signals from the source node 106 are coupled through the protection switches 211, 212 and path switches [[355', 356']] 305', 306' and multiplexed by the multiplexer 307' into a WDM signal and forwarded onto the protection path 132 and transmitted in the counterclockwise direction to the intermediate node 107 and relayed to the destination node 108.

The paragraph beginning on page 20, line 7 has been amended as follows:

If the node A detects the occurrence of a failure on the ring 102 while it is using the ring 101 for normal transmission, it send an OAM frame at wavelength λ_1 on the ring 101 to node B and moves its switch 502 to the right. In response, the node B moves its switch 505 to the right. The transmit signal λ_3, at node B, is now coupled through the switch 505 to the protection path established on wavelength [[λ_3]] λ_3 in the ring 101 and transmitted in the clockwise direction. At node A, this signal is received through the switch 502. Similar to Fig. 5, when the ring 102 fails, both nodes maintain their switches 501 and 506 in the left position and the transmit signals of both nodes propagate in the same clockwise direction over ring 101.

The paragraph beginning on page 20, line 23 has been amended as follows:

Routes that are followed by the signals of Fig. 9 are schematically [[show]] shown in Fig. 10 in the case of node A of Fig. 8. During normal operation transmit signal λ_1 is coupled through protection switch 611 and path switch 705 to ring 101. Terminating signal λ_1 from ring 102 is coupled through splitters 711 and 615 to protection switch 619 as indicated by a solid line.

The paragraph beginning on page 21, line 9 has been amended as follows:

The following description is again concerned with a four-fiber ring network. In this network, low priority signals, or extra traffic are carried by protection rings 102 and 104. Fig. 11A shows one example such a four-ring topology network in which extra traffic is carried on an extra-traffic path 1101 on ring [[104]] 102 between nodes 106 and 107 (shorter side of [[a]] the ring) and on [[a]] extra-traffic paths 1102, 1103 and 1104 on ring [[102]] 104 between these nodes (longer side of the ring) as indicated by thick solid lines.

The paragraph beginning on page 21, line 21 has been amended as follows:

In addition, the shorter side of [[a]] the ring 102 between nodes 106 and 107 has a smaller number of extra-traffic paths than its longer side. Thus, it is advantageous to first clear the extra-traffic path on the shorter side of a ring when a working path 11 between nodes 106 and 107 fails. Extra-traffic paths on the long side of the ring 104 are cleared only if a failure also occurs on a protection path 14 or all links between nodes 106 and 107 as shown in Fig. 11B.